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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Attached Memorandum on "Response of the Cuban People to Overt US Intervention"

1. The attached memorandum has been prepared in response to a Defense Department request for a CIA estimate of the "probable number of persons in each province" of Cuba, who, in the event of overt US military intervention to be followed by the holding of free elections, would:

- a. "engage in hostile resistance (other than the organized armed forces).
- b. "vote for Castro/Communist candidates or their like, rather than for anti-Castro/Communist candidates in free elections held under the circumstances set forth above."

A copy of the DD/P memorandum to DD/I conveying this request is attached.

2. Subject to your approval, we propose that this memorandum be forwarded to DD/P for transmission to the requestors.

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SHERMAN KENT

Assistant Director National Estimates

Encls: #1 Memo for DCI, as above.
#2 Memo for DDI, Request

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TS# 142493-a
Enclosure #1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Response of the Cuban People to Overt US Intervention

The Problem

1. To estimate the scale of active popular resistance to US intervention in Cuba and probable public support for Castro/Communist candidates in free elections following the overthrow of the present regime by US forces.

Popular Resistance to Intervention

2. We assume for the purposes of this paper that a US military intervention would be carried out in such a way as rapidly to defeat the Cuban armed forces and seize key localities and facilities. The Cuban forces would almost certainly not attempt to hold their ground for any length of time against such an assault. Instead, many units would revert to guerrilla status, retaining their weapons and other equipment, and taking advantage of caches of arms and supplies which they have already established. In such

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a situation some of the population would actively cooperate with or even join the guerrillas, others would voluntarily furnish aid and intelligence to them, and still others would be constrained by terror to do the same. The essence of the problem is to estimate how much support the guerrillas would receive in these ways.

3. The extent of popular resistance would depend primarily on whether the US intervention were regarded as a liberation from an oppressive dictatorial regime or as the subjugation of the Cuban people by "Yankee imperialism." It is probable that the US would incur considerable -- perhaps widespread -- resentment, but there would also be dissatisfaction with and opposition to the dictatorship and gratitude for its overthrow. The nature of the reaction would also depend on a host of other factors: e.g., the circumstances under which the US had moved; the degree of security which US forces could provide friendly Cubans against guerrilla terrorism; the extent of death, destruction, and hardship occasioned by the US action, etc.

4. A massive US propaganda campaign declaring that the US was liberating Cuba from repressive dictatorship and was determined to return the country to Cubans would tend to reduce the magnitude of the adverse impact caused by the invasion,

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particularly if other Latin American governments identified with orderly social reform were associated with the effort. Moreover, the unfavorable image of the US operation would be diminished if the US were able quickly to hand Cuba over to a provisional government believed to be dedicated to what Cubans think of as the original aims of the Revolution, headed by Cubans who are still identified with these aims, and intent upon giving way to an elected government within a reasonable period of time. Even in this case, however, the US (perhaps with assistance from one or two Latin American states) would be obliged to participate in the maintenance of public order and the raising of a police and security apparatus to fill the vacuum created by the destruction of Castro's forces. US experience in handling the problems of transition in occupied areas, notably in World War II, suggests that the period of stabilization and preparations for a return to full self-government might have to be protracted, especially since it is uncertain how much popular support the various would-be successors to Castro could command, even in coalition.

5. We have estimated in NIE 85-62 (now before the USIB Representatives) that perhaps 25 percent of the Cuban public actively supports the Castro regime. However, this is a highly

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impressionistic figure, not based on or susceptible to quantitative proof. Furthermore, even if this figure were substantially correct today, the US invasion would probably have the effect of changing it.

6. On the one hand, those whose support for the regime has been essentially opportunistic, though often active, would almost certainly abandon the Castro/Communist cause. On the other hand, we believe that in the aftermath of an invasion the Communist Party, even though it would probably have lost many of its leaders, would retain, at least at the outset, significant capabilities for organizing guerrilla resistance and public protest. They would represent the US invasion as anti-Cuban and all Cubans who collaborated with it as traitors.

7. During the period in which US forces were securing control of the island, effective and active resistance would probably be limited largely to elements of the standing army and the ready reserve units of the militia. In the aftermath, however, many of these elements would probably remain active and receive the support of some of the civilians who now favor the regime and some members of the presently passive middle group who would be convinced that the purpose of the US invasion was to destroy Cuba's independence.

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8. The evidence available to us does not provide a basis for quantitative estimates of resistance forces or estimates as to the locations in which the most active resistance would take place. In general, however, the cities and the more rugged mountain areas of Pinar del Rio, Las Villas, and Oriente would be the most likely scenes for such activities. We believe that a relatively small number of Cubans would risk their lives in resistance activities. However, a large enough group would do so -- and would be able to obtain necessary support -- to make the pacification of Cuba a long and drawn out process.

Public Response to Free Elections

9. In a free election anti-Castro groups in Cuba and returning exiles would be able to put up lists of candidates including many names with significant vote-getting appeal. However, they would suffer from the charge of being tools of the "Yankee invaders" and, in the case of the exiles, would probably encounter difficulties in gaining acceptance as spokesmen for the vast majority which had remained in Cuba. The Castro/Communists would retain strong and important psychological advantages. Nevertheless, even in "free" elections under military occupation, Castro/

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Communist candidates would presumably not be allowed to campaign openly on a platform opposing the US intervention and its consequences. Thus they would be under a heavy electoral disadvantage.

10. Much would depend upon unpredictable factors, but we believe that if an invasion were to take place under presently prevailing circumstances, a significant proportion of the votes cast in subsequent free elections would be protest votes in favor of candidates who espoused Cuban nationalism and demanded early departure of the US. Many of the candidates elected by such votes would probably have Communist support or otherwise be identified with the Castro/Communist regime. Nevertheless, under the circumstances, Castro/Communist candidates would almost certainly be in a minority.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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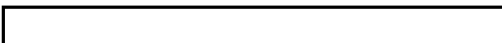
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24 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

ATTENTION : 
Assistant to the DD/I (Planning)

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SUBJECT : Probable Public Reaction

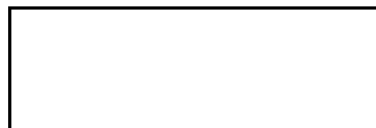
1. Quoted below is part of a memorandum from Brig. General William H. Craig concerning a Defense Department requirement for an estimate of probable public reaction in Cuba under certain circumstances:

"Consequently, I request that a requirement be levied on CIA to prepare an estimate by 10 March setting forth the probable number of persons in each province that:

- a. Will engage in hostile resistance (other than the organized armed forces).
- b. Will vote for Castro/Communist candidates or their like, rather than for anti-Castro/Communist candidates in free elections held under the circumstances set forth above." (These circumstances refer to overt intervention by the US in certain circumstances.)

2. You will recall that Mr. Harvey had certain conversations with you on this subject and you agreed that at least some type of informal estimate could be ready by the required date, fully realizing the difficulty involved in meeting General Craig's requirement. Please feel free to make any comments you believe necessary including making such assumptions you believe would help set the estimate in proper context, particularly in view of the paucity of available intelligence. For example, one assumption might be that US forces have moved into Cuba in strength and have pacified Cuba within a given number of days. At that point, without knowing what political parties or groups or political figures might have arisen, what would be the best possible estimate at that time for continued resistance.

3. This office will be glad to assist your effort in any way we can.



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